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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION
WASHINGTON

December 31, 1941

OFFICE OF INFORMATION MEMORANDUM NO. 15

Clearance of Informational Material with Possible
Military Significance

War conditions necessitate a careful check upon informational materials issued by civilian Departments which may have military significance. The issuance of such information might give aid and comfort to the enemy.

I have been in consultation with the Office of Facts and Figures and the Director of Censorship on procedure for determining whether Department of Agriculture informational materials have military significance and therefore should be altered or withheld. The Director of Censorship writes that "For the present, at least, I believe the Government Departments will have to decide among themselves what should be given out, consulting among themselves when necessary." The Office of Facts and Figures may be able to give us some informal help in expediting such consultation with the War and the Navy Departments particularly.

The situation calls for much more careful and precise management of our output of information than we've given heretofore. A good many confidential reports have been duplicated and circulated in numbers of 50 or more copies. Henceforth even these reports should be checked in with this Office if there is any likelihood at all that they contain information which might have military significance. We will arrange for the clearance of all this matter on a formal or an informal basis with the other Government Departments involved.

I request that each Chief of Bureau instruct his editor to survey the regular series of duplicated material that are issued and also to go over each item to be issued as an individual document and check in with this Office before issuance henceforth.

The handling of press and radio copy will not require any special attention. The Chiefs of Press and Radio Service will simply add to their normal cross-checking, a check for military significance. The same will be true of printed publications. The field in which new attention needs to be given is the duplicated documents either in series or as individual items which have previously not been sent through any definite clearance channel in the Office of Information. These now should come into this Office if there's any occasion to believe that they carry information having military significance.

I suggest the Chiefs of Bureaus also instruct their field staffs to scrutinize all series and individual duplicated documents and press and radio material as well, and in case of doubt concerning military significance to send it in to your Washington office for quick check with this Office.

It goes without saying that the aim is to make certain that any information that would be of value to the enemy is withheld; but at the same time to issue all information which will be of use to farm and city people in carrying on their work that contributes toward winning the war. This was the general principle laid down by the President in announcing the appointment of a Director of Censorship. It should be our general principle in operating our information services. For the time being the responsibility is on us to see that the principle is applied in our operations. We should be proud to be entrusted with the responsibility, and we will prove ourselves worthy of the trust.

Morse Salisbury
Director of Information